

URBAN DISTRICT OF SALISBURY.

1906.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health.

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors.

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN :—

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report on the state of the Public Health and details of Sanitary Work during the past year together with action taken under the Factory and Workshops Act 1901.

Tables prepared in compliance with the requirement of the Local Government Board are deposited with the Town Clerk for your inspection; these have not been printed.

I am, Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

E. T. FISON.

REPORT.

URBAN DISTRICT OF SALISBURY.

Statistical Summary :—

Acreage	...	...	...	...	1,700
Population at Census, 1901	...	...	...	...	20,185
Population estimated to July 1st, 1906	...	...	...	...	21,495
Number of persons per acre	...	...	...	...	12·4
Number of houses inhabited (Census 1901)	...	...	...	...	4,145
Number of houses and shops on Rate Book, 1906	...	...	...	...	4,795
Average number per house (Census 1901)	...	...	...	...	4·8
Births registered in 1906	...	...	...	...	466
Birth Rate	...	...	...	...	21·6
Deaths occurring in 1906	...	...	...	...	392
Death Rate (crude)	...	...	...	...	18·2
Death Rate (corrected)	...	...	...	...	14·5
Average Birth Rate, '96—'05	...	...	...	...	24·0
Average Death Rate, '96—'05 (crude)	...	...	...	...	16·3
Average Death Rate, '96—'05 (corrected)	...	...	...	...	15·0
Death Rate from Zymotic Disease	...	...	...	...	0·8

N.B.—A crude Death Rate includes Non-Residents. A corrected Death Rate excludes these.

By the term “Non-Residents” is meant persons brought into the District on account of sickness or infirmity, and dying in Public Institutions there.

BIRTHS.

The number of Births registered in the District in 1906 was 466 being slightly in excess of the number for 1905. Of these births 248 were males, 218 were females, and 10 were illegitimate births.

The excess of Births over corrected number of Deaths was 152.

DEATHS.

The number of Deaths actually occurring in 1906 was 392 and slightly exceeds the Deaths in 1905. The corrected number of Deaths was 313 as many as 79 Deaths occurring of “Non-Residents,” *i.e.* (not belonging to this District) in Public Institutions.

The Deaths in Public Institutions were distributed as follows :—

	Residents.	Non-Residents.
Fisherton Asylum	...	41
Workhouse	18	11
Infirmary	28	27
	<hr/> 46	<hr/> 79

Owing to the lamentable railway accident at Salisbury Station on July 1st 1906, 28 deaths occurred ; of these deaths only two were residents of Salisbury but as the 26 are not “Non-Residents” for the purpose of mortality tables they have to be included in the Death Rate for the District. The deduction of 26 deaths would lower the corrected to 13·3. The Death Rate 14·5 is lower than the average for the past 10 years.

Infantile Mortality.—*i.e.* Deaths under one year of age per 1000 births registered was 105·2. The number of these deaths was 49 ; 15 of these deaths were under one month of age. This infantile mortality rate is lower than the average for the past 10 years.

Zymotic Disease.—Death Rate is calculated upon deaths from the seven principal Zymotic Diseases, *i.e.*, Smallpox, Measles, Scarlet Fever, Whooping Cough, Diphtheria, Enteric Fever and Diarrhoea.

The deaths from Zymotic Disease number 18. Whooping Cough 2, Enteric Fever 1, and Diarrhoea 15.

In regard to the deaths from Diarrhoea, 13 occurred in children under 1 year of age and it is probable that a considerable proportion of these deaths were due to preventable causes, *e.g.* improper feeding and to contaminated milk.

The present system of the supply of milk is far from satisfactory and improvement in the near future will be probably made for delivery of milk more direct from the producer to the consumer so that the risks of contamination, which at present abound, may be reduced.

Tuberculosis.—31 deaths occurred from Tubercular disease, 20 being due to Pulmonary Tuberculosis giving a death rate of 1·02 per 1000 living of the population.

Cancer.—30 deaths occurred from Cancer or Malignant disease.

Accidents.—34 deaths occurred from Accidents during the year.

Inquests were held upon 44 deaths during the year, 34 being due to Accidental causes, 3 to Burns, 5 to Heart Diseases, 1 to Suicide and 1 on an infant found dead at Harnham.

The number of deaths at 65 years and upwards was 111, only 4 reached the age of 90 and upwards, and one was a death at 100 years.

Infectious Diseases Notification Act 1889.—The number of Infectious Diseases notified during the year was 53.

Diphtheria, 11 cases, no deaths.

Erysipelas, 4 cases, 2 deaths.

Scarlet Fever, 38 cases, no deaths.

During the year 31 patients have been admitted to the Isolation Hospital (for Scarlet Fever only) ; 2 cases occurred in Hospital amongst the staff.

I have made a large number of visits, as was necessary, to your Hospital during the year and am glad to report no deaths occurred. The cases as a rule were of a mild type, one case however was unusually virulent and necessitated special nursing, in another case an operation of a somewhat severe nature was required.

No "Return cases" occurred ; the average length of stay in hospital of patients admitted and discharged in 1906 was 40·8 days.

With regard to payment of fees for treatment in hospital when the wages of the family exceed a fixed amount I have urged in Committee and recommend now that these fees, except in very special circumstances, be abolished.

In my opinion removal of infectious cases to Hospital or doing anything to prevent the spread of infection is to be regarded as a benefit to the community as a whole, and therefore the cost of that benefit ought to be shared by the population at large and not put upon the wage earner who happens by misfortune to have infectious disease in his family.

Enteric Fever.—Six cases occurred with one death, in probability only one of these cases was infected in the district, two came from Bulford Camp, one arrived here in Salisbury from America and was taken ill almost directly, two others arrived here from neighbouring counties and became ill earlier than could be accounted for if infection took place in the Borough.

Puerperal Fever.—One case, no death.

Compulsory Notification of Pulmonary Tuberculosis.—Considering the danger that people suffering from consumption are to themselves and to others, without adoption of precaution, it would seem advisable that the Local Government Board be asked to extend the Infectious Diseases Notification Act to this disease in order that the Council may know :—

1. The proportion of consumptives to the population.
2. Their conditions of living and working.
3. And most important of all may instruct them in a proper mode of living and to take precautions so as to prevent infection of others.

Infectious Diseases Prevention Act, 1890.—The Order of the Local Government Board as to duties of Medical Officers of Health, March 23 1891, states :—

“He shall advise the Sanitary Authority..... as to the adoption by the Sanitary Authority of the Infectious Diseases Prevention Act 1890, or of any section or sections of that Act.”

It was stated at the Inquiry for the Borough Extension that this Act had been adopted but the Town Clerk is unable to find any Minute as to its adoption. I therefore recommend that it be adopted or re-adopted in proper form.

This Act provides for :—

1. Closure of milk supplies from a dairy in case of infectious disease being traced to the dairy.
2. Gives additional powers as to disinfection of premises and bedding.
3. Gives powers for detention in hospital of a person who is a patient in an infectious disease hospital and who on leaving would not have proper accommodation for prevention of spread of infection.

House Accommodation. The number of houses for human habitation built in 1906 was 32 ; these houses were inspected and passed by your Surveyor.

During the earlier part of the year I inspected the whole of the Courts of the District. This class of property is let at a low rental 2/6—4/6 per week, and as always is found their cleanliness depended greatly upon the class of tenant ; as a rule the houses in these Courts could not be said to be insanitary although few of them have through ventilation ; in some instances however the buildings and premises themselves are in very bad repair and it is questionable whether the proper course would not be to pull them down.

Sewerage and Drainage. The works mentioned in my last Annual Report under the control of Sir Alexander Binnie have almost approached completion.

These works followed upon the extension of the Borough in 1904 and consisted in re-sewering the District and adopting as far as possible the separate system.

Where new sewers have not been put down the existing sewers have been relaid and made watertight.

Ventilation of sewers is provided for by open manhole covers in the streets and high cast iron ventilating columns connected to the sewer. During the middle of the year many complaints

were made owing to the smells from these open manholes and it was found necessary to close some of them. Latterly no complaints have reached me of any nuisance from these manholes and I consider it would be a wrong principle to cover them all, as although by the aid of the ventilating columns no pressure sufficient to force house traps would exist, yet the sewers would be improperly ventilated. In my opinion if the sewers are kept clean and swept out by systematic inspection so that there is no obstruction to the flow of sewage no further trouble from these manholes will exist.

At the Sewage Disposal Works alterations and additions have been made with a view of treating the whole of the sewage up to three times the dry weather flow by septic tank system and aerating continuous flow beds, the effluent being further carried over a fine filter bed to take out some black suspended matter before being passed into the river. These works will produce an effluent of high order, 500,000 gallons is taken as the estimate of "dry weather flow."

During the late summer and autumn many complaints reached me as to the offensive smells from the Sewage Disposal Works. These smells originated from the septic tank effluent as it is sprinkled over the continuous flow beds. I am glad to be able to report that this nuisance is not so prevalent as formerly but from the reports I still receive I cannot say that it is non-existent. This is a most important matter and should the nuisance recur it will be my duty to draw your serious attention to it.

Removal and Disposal of House Refuse. The whole of the District is scavenged systematically, part of the District being done by the Council and part let out by Contract. The Contractors should provide covered carts for the removal of this refuse.

With few exceptions there are no proper fixed or movable ashpits in the District.

The tenants place their refuse in uncovered wooden boxes, pans or other receptacles of a varied and unsuitable character and deposit them on the kerb of the pavement to await removal by the scavengers. They are often there for some hours and while there children and dogs turn over the contents and upset them in the road.

This is not as it ought to be, it is unsightly and insanitary, against the provisions of the Public Health Act and against your own Byelaws.

In regard to the facts and to the deduction I make, I think all are agreed.

Your Sanitary Inspector reports to me that eight houses built under Byelaws with respect to New Streets and Buildings are not provided with ashpits at all; this is in direct contravention of Section 35 of the Public Health Act 1875 which provides a penalty up to £20 for non-provision of an ashpit. Seeing that under the Public Health Amendment Act 1890 other receptacles may be substituted for a fixed ashpit your Byelaw No. 85 (New Streets and Buildings) provides for the construction of a movable ashpit "of galvanised iron or other suitable impervious material of a sufficient strength and thickness."

By the Council's Byelaws then the principle of a proper movable ashpit is admitted and I consider that by a resolution of the Council Byelaw No. 7 (Nuisances) "Every person who shall remove any filth, dirt, ashes or rubbish from any premises—along any footway, pavement—shall use a suitable vessel or receptacle properly constructed and furnished with a sufficient covering"—ought to be interpreted as meaning a movable ashpit constructed in accordance with Byelaw No. 85 (New Streets and Buildings.)

If the Council do not agree with these observations it would appear to me that as Byelaw No. 7 (Nuisances) is daily infringed and no action has been taken, the house refuse had better be left in the yards of the houses and the scavengers go there and take it out themselves, there being apparently no obligation on the part of the occupier to put out the refuse on the pavement for the scavengers.

The refuse is destroyed in a Horsfall's Destructor which does its work admirably and economically, no nuisance ever arises from this process.

Water Supply is from deep wells in the chalk, the sources of supply being four in number, and is ample in quantity.

Three of the sources are owned by the District Council, one by a Company with Parliamentary powers.

Four samples per quarter are taken from any of the four sources for analysis and a high standard of purity is maintained.

The water supply per head of the population for domestic purposes is 21 gallons, and for trade purposes per head of the population is 16 gallons.

Places over which the Council have supervision.

1. *Common Lodging Houses.*—There is one in the district. Ninety-six inspections were made, and in every instance it was found kept in a clean and satisfactory condition. Limewashing was carried out as required by the Public Health Act, 1875, section 82. No case of infectious disease occurred during the year.

2. *Slaughter Houses.*—There are seventeen registered Slaughter Houses in the district. 441 inspections were made when they were found kept in a proper manner so far as cleanliness is concerned. Limewashing as required by your Bye-laws was carried out. One slaughterhouse was closed owing to owner giving up business.

3. *Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops.*—16 Dairies, 26 Milkshops and 11 Cowsheds are on the register. 105 inspections were made and no nuisance was found thereon. Limewashing was carried out at the Dairies and Cowsheds. Early morning inspections were made of the Cowsheds between 4.30 a.m. and 6 a.m. to ascertain at the time of milking as to the cleanliness of the cows' udders and teats, also the hands of persons engaged in the milking. Inspections were also made between 1.30 p.m. and 3 p.m.

4. *Bakehouses.*—There are 28 Bakehouses and Restaurant Kitchens on the register, and 64 inspections were made of them; all were limewashed in accordance with the Act. Their general sanitary condition was found to be good. One bakehouse was closed during the year the owner having retired from business.

5. *Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.*—It was found necessary to revise the Register of Workshops in consequence of mechanical power being introduced in a few instances, thus converting them into Factories, and other smaller workshops were either closed or the occupiers discontinuing the employment of hands in same. 350 inspections were made of the 43 Factories 234 Workshops and Workplaces and premises in connection therewith during the year, and 47 notices for the abatement of nuisances were served. The defects found were, want of cleanliness 7, overcrowding 1, insufficient, unsuitable or defective sanitary accommodation 21, other nuisances 69.

6. *Outworkers.*—During the year, 61 lists were received with the names of 181 outworkers. Each of the rooms where home work is carried out was examined, and a general inspection of the premises made. 21 notices for the abatement of nuisances were served. The defects were, defective and untrapped drains 8, defective closets 13, dirty ceilings 9, other nuisances 27.

7. *Offensive Trades.*—Seventeen inspections were made of the two offensive trades in the district, and they appeared to be well conducted and kept free from nuisance. Two applications for permission to boil tripe were received and granted. No complaints were received during the year.

8. *Unsound Food.*—The carcase of a cow and 210 pounds of beef were found on examination to be diseased. These were voluntarily surrendered and destroyed. No further action was taken.

102 inspections were made of the shops and places used for the sale of meat, fish, poultry, fruit, vegetables, flour, milk, &c., used for the food of man. Complaints also having been made as to unsound food being deposited at times for sale in the Market observations were made but nothing of an unsound character was detected.

9. *Premises used for the Manufacture of Ice Cream.*—31 inspections were made of the premises where ice creams were manufactured. Also all utensils thoroughly examined. Generally speaking great care is exercised in the cleanliness of these vessels to prevent contamination of the cream and in no instance was it found necessary to make complaint. The sanitary condition of the premises was found to be very fair.

10. *Cattle Trucks, Pens, &c.*, both at Milford and Great Western Railway Station sidings. 51 inspections were made and 1118 Cattle Trucks and Pens used for the transport of animals examined. All were found to be properly cleansed, disinfected and limewashed, and no nuisance discovered.

11. *House to House Inspections.*—One hundred and ninety seven house to house inspections were made of different properties. Particulars as to sanitary convenience, drainage, water supply, air space, number of living and sleeping rooms, number of inmates and the conditions of the floors, roofs and gutters were taken.

12. *Disinfection.*—In consequence of an outbreak of scarlet fever occurring in the ward of Saint Martin during the latter part of 1905 and several of the cases having attended St. Osmund's Schools, it was thought desirable in January last to put the schoolrooms under a process of fumigation and disinfection which was accordingly done and assisted greatly in checking the spread of the disease.

41 rooms were disinfected and cleansed after the removal to Hospital or recovery of patients suffering from infectious diseases. All library books found at patients' houses were disinfected before being returned to the Library.

Disinfectants were supplied where needed. In some cases sanitary defects were found in houses where infectious disease occurred ; these were readily remedied by the owners.

13. *General.*—A great amount of work has been executed towards improving the sanitary condition of houses and premises generally. Drainage has received special attention, and in order to discover defective systems and to ensure good workmanship sound materials and joints put in, I applied the smoke test in 61 instances which proved of invaluable assistance. In places where the yard paving was absent or defective the same has been remedied and the yard paved and drained. In times of wet weather unpaved yards cause much dampness to the houses contiguous to them and it is most desirable that the paving of yards and open spaces in close proximity to dwellinghouses should be of impervious character so that slops and other liquids when thrown down can find their way to the drains.

The following are some of the matters which received attention.

Number of house to house inspections and after complaint of nuisances made during the year	...	...	...	290
Number of Notices served	...	...	...	302
Number of letters written	...	...	...	141
Number of re-inspections	...	...	...	643

Nuisances abated.

Overcrowding	...	...	...	9
Houses cleansed and repaired	...	...	...	51
Drains cleansed, relaid or repaired	...	...	...	151

Traps fixed to drains	...	...	...	163
Sinks made to discharge over gullies in outside air	...	...	...	31
Sinks, troughs and waste pipes provided	...	...	...	41
Sinks, troughs repaired or refixed	...	...	...	12
Bath and lavatory wastes made to discharge over gullies	...	...	...	17
Water closets cleansed and repaired	...	...	...	115
Water closets where water was laid on	...	...	...	6
Urinals cleansed and repaired and water laid on	...	...	...	5
Houses with insufficient drainage, extra provided	...	...	...	9
Drains removed from inside houses and washhouses	...	...	...	16
Fresh air inlets to house drains repaired	...	...	...	11
Drains intercepted from sewer	...	...	...	20
Drains disconnected from streams and river	...	...	...	4
Grease interceptors fixed	...	...	...	4
Ventilating shafts provided or repaired to drains	...	...	...	22
Inspection chambers constructed	...	...	...	21
Inspection chambers provided with air tight covers	...	...	...	8
Slaughterhouses drained to sewer	...	...	...	2
Urinal accommodation provided	...	...	...	1
Insufficient accommodation, extra w.c. provided	...	...	...	5
Sanitary conveniences provided to workshops	...	...	...	2
Dilapidated water closets rebuilt...	...	...	...	2
Chimneys raised or repaired	...	...	...	2
New pans and traps provided for water closets	...	...	...	38
Pedestal basins fixed	...	...	...	18
Water closets ventilated	...	...	...	9
Seats, floors and roofs of closets repaired	...	...	...	38
Soil pipes inside houses abolished and new soil pipes fixed outside of houses and ventilated	...	...	...	1
Closet cisterns repaired or provided	...	...	...	41
Accumulation of manure and other refuse removed	...	...	...	21
Cesspools abolished	...	...	...	3
Cesspools cleaned out	...	...	...	13
Dust receptacles provided	...	...	...	7
Dust receptacles provided with covers	...	...	...	13
Yards paved and drained or repaired	...	...	...	40
Leaky roofs and gutters to roofs repaired	...	...	...	131
Washhouses limewashed	...	...	...	22
Defective pumps repaired	...	...	...	2
Soil pipes repaired or renewed	...	...	...	3
Houses supplied with Town water	...	...	...	1
Samples of well water taken	...	...	...	3
Stable yards drained, paved or cleansed	...	...	...	7
Pig nuisances abated	...	...	...	3
Pig styes erected	...	...	...	4
Pig styes cleansed and limewashed	...	...	...	18
Floors relaid or repaired in houses and washhouses	...	...	...	37
Ground floor ventilation provided to houses	...	...	...	3
Fall spouting disconnected house drains	...	...	...	33
Rooms cleansed after infectious disease	...	...	...	41
Lots of bedding, &c., destroyed after infectious disease	...	...	...	7
Dangerous stairs and defective windows repaired	...	...	...	31
Fall spouting provided to houses	...	...	...	9
Animals kept in a dirty state in close proximity to dwelling- houses removed	...	...	...	14
Manure receptacles provided	...	...	...	8
Manure receptacles provided with covers	...	...	...	4

Floors of slaughterhouses and lairage pens relaid	...	...	4
Slaughterhouses limewashed	...	...	18
Lairage pens	...	...	25
Dairies and Cowsheds limewashed	...	...	27
Bakehouses	...	...	7
Common Lodginghouse	...	...	1
Floors of Bakehouses relaid	...	...	1
Foul and offensive ditches cleansed	...	...	2
Smoke observations taken	...	...	6
Smoke nuisances abated	...	...	2
Overcrowding in workshops abated	...	...	1

Van Dwellings.—At the October Fair, 59 inspections were made and the earavans were found kept in a proper condition and the inmates free from infectious disease, in fact all the dwellings appeared scrupulously clean.

No legal proceedings were taken during the year ; this is satisfactory as shewing that owners and occupiers of property are more anxious to keep their premises in a reasonable sanitary state.

